Linear Rock vs. Point-oriented Rock Myths Exploded

By Steve Grant

A letter to the editor of The Tech from Glenn Holm '71, published in the November 15, 1968, issue, raised serious contemplation of the music industry and its role in society. Holm's letter, which he questioned in regard to the validity of a linear, fragmented approach to rock music, caused an immediate response in the form of a letter from Johnston to the editor.

Johnston's letter, which he titled "Linear Rock vs. Point-oriented Rock Myths Exploded," was published in the November 22, 1968, issue of The Tech. In his letter, Johnston critiqued Holm's assumptions about rock music, arguing that the linear approach to music was not only simplistic but also did not accurately reflect the complexity and nuance of the music of the time. He also challenged Holm's claim that certain musicians were using "groovy things" in their music, suggesting that Holm's criticism was not grounded in a deep understanding of the music itself.

The exchange between Holm and Johnston was part of a larger debate about the role of music in society and the responsibilities of musicians as social critics. It highlighted the tension between those who saw music as a powerful force for social change and those who were more interested in its entertainment value. The debate continued for many years, with musicians and critics alike exploring the ways in which music could be used to challenge social norms and promote social justice.